1: Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
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159 561 796 Subsequently he was a "grandfather" in the crazy-dance, but in none of the other ceremonies. He never participated in the sun-dance, having had no occasion to do so, he said. Nevertheless he once was the man selected during the sun-dance to kill a buffalo with one arrow, the buffalo's skin being cut up into thongs with which the rafters of the lodge are fastened. He succeeded in killing the buffalo with one arrow.

Another man, now middle-aged, belonged to the "holding-to-a-dog's-tail" company. He made successively the fly-dance, the star-dance, and then the crazy-dance.

Star and War Dances.

171 561 796 575 [177] At present the organization into comparatively small companies is no longer maintained. In its place there is a division of the young men of the tribe into two groups, one of which practises, or did until recently, the star-dance; the other, the grass or war dance. The latter is universally stated to be a recent importation from the Sioux, apparently within the present generation. The star-dance, however, is an old ceremony, it is claimed; and this assertion is borne out by the occurrence among the Arapaho of the *analogous star-dance*. Among the Arapaho the star-dance, like the kit-fox dance, is a preliminary which appears to be gone through by all the men of the tribe, but has neither the standing, the organization, nor the definite observances and regalia of the subsequent ceremonies. Among the Gros Ventre the star-dance was formerly also outside the regular series of dances. It is generally spoken of as having been a warrior dance, made at any time and on any suitable occasion, and without the rigorously prescribed course of other dances. Some men seem to have made it before the fly-dance, and others afterward. Even in former times, however, before the war-dance had come among the Gros Ventre, the star-dance included only part of the young men of the tribe. The old men surviving from certain companies have never taken part in the star-dance, and explain this by the fact that there was rivalry between their company and the star-dancers. It might thus, perhaps, seem that a star company had a ceremony of its own, the star-dance, from which the members of rival companies naturally held aloof; but it is very improbable that only one age-company parallel to the others, and none of these others, should have had a distinctive ceremony. It is also improbable that this company, being one of many, should have been so large as to include about half of the men of the tribe, for it appears that some such large proportion took part in the star-dance. This makes it almost impossible to believe that there existed a star company exactly

1: Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
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analogous to the "green-grass" and "young-sheep" and other companies, but having an additional ceremony confined to itself. On the other hand, if the "stars" were not one of the age-companies, it is hard to see with what groups of men they competed. It is therefore not improbable that there formerly existed among the Gros Ventre a star-society, which had a ceremony of its own, and which, while based partly on age in being constituted of young men, was outside and independent of the scheme of the hena"wu, with which it had no, or only indirect, relation, and with whose working out it must in some measure have conflicted. Such a society, which would be a true society in being based on a membership determined by choice, purchase, initiation, or supernatural experience, — in other words, by selection, would be of a type of organization quite distinct from the ordinary Gros Ventre or Arapaho age-company performing in the course of its existence an entire series of tribal ceremonies, but would have abundant parallels in other ceremonial societies on the Plains and elsewhere. Its presence would therefore be readily explainable as an incipient intrusion due to the cultural influence of some other tribe, the chief objection to such an explanation being the occurrence of the star-dance also among the Arapaho, but without a known association with a special society. This suggested character of the Gros Ventre star-society and star-dance fits the facts, but is after all only hypothetical; and altogether *the relation of the ceremony to the* remainder of the Gros Ventre ceremonial organizations is not yet clear.

The star-dance as formerly held is said to have lasted four days and nights. There might be further subsequent dancing. At the beginning of the ceremony, the dancers went to four places at the camp-circle facing or representing the four cardinal directions, and at each place danced before the tent of a prominent man. The owner of the tent gave away property and filled a pipe for the dancers, after smoking which they proceeded to the next one. After having danced in the four places, they danced in the middle of the camp-circle. This might be in the open air, or in a lodge made of two large tents combined. The singers were four old men, who accompanied themselves on small hand drums. The dancers' wives sat behind these four old men and sang with them. The dancer's relatives at times went to them and danced with them, taking their rattles and temporarily using them. The dancers' bodies seem to have been variously decorated; but they had no distinctive regalia except rattles. These were alike in general character, being loop-shaped, and decorated with gaudy paint and attachments, but there seems to have been no attempt at making them uniform. The dancing-lodge was elliptical, with the door towards the east and a fire near the western end. The singers were at this end, and the dancers near them, in two lines, along the sides of the lodge, facing each other. In dancing

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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retained throughout its existence and held its ceremonies without participating in those of any other company." He gives the list of company names. He is aware that the Stars are not quite comparable to the other companies but is not clear as to the position of that organization.[11] 561

Our information from The Boy, whose father, Lame Bull, was the contemporary of Bill Jones, mentioned by Kroeber, and whose ceremonial experiences were the same as Bill Jones', throws some light on the subject. Furthermore we have useful material from Turn Toes, who was a member of another one of the companies. Incidental information was obtained from our other informants as well.

According to The Boy: " When a bunch of young men of somewhat similar age grew up, they were old enough to take the place of another group or company. There were a number of these companies. These young men began to have meetings and these meetings had names, although not organized as yet. Let us say 'Rosebushes' would be the name by which they were called. Another group of boys grew up and these would be called 'Hang-onto-a-dog's-tail-and-run-or-be-dragged-by-it.' Other groups would come along and be called by such names as 'Many-little-horses,' 'Potbellies,' 'Calves (of the leg),' and so on." Incidentally The Boy recognized 21 out of the 25 names listed by Kroeber as those of companies, although he gave the names above quoted quite independently of Kroeber's list.

The young men who so met and acquired names were 15–17 years of age, according to one informant, and 16–19 or 20, according to another. In any case, they decided as a body to join either of the two societies known as the Stars and the Wolf-men. We know from Kroeber's data, as well as from The Boy, that Bill Jones and Lame Bull were members of the group of young men who banded together under the name of " Bigbellies " or " Potbellies " and who subsequently joined the Stars. Lame Bull was born about 1825, so this company must have joined the Stars some time in the early 1840's. One of our informants, Charles Buckman, a contemporary of The Boy, remembers having heard that the Potbellies at one time numbered about a hundred. 561 575

[11] Kroeber, 1908, pp. 232–33.

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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561 Turn Toes (b. 1860) was one with 30 or 40 other young men who, in a group known as Calves (of leg) joined the Wolf-men about 1877. Turn Toes was certain that "Having-the-breast-of-a-woman-as-pillow" and "Holding-onto-dog's-tail" were companies which had joined the Stars. According to Turn Toes' account, when his company, the Calves, joined the Wolf-men, four men from the company which had just preceded them in entry were asked by the present company to act as "elder brothers." These four considered themselves honored to instruct the new company before they would appear publicly at the next Wolf-men's dance. Lame Bull had been one of the four so selected from among the Potbellies to initiate the next incoming Star group, but we failed to obtain the name of that company.

It apparently was permissible, either before or after the company was so initiated into the society, that any one of its members could vow the least important and simplest of the Sacred Dances, namely, the Fly Dance. When a member of the company so vowed, all the members of that company, and they alone, went through the ceremony, after which they were eligible as "soldiers," [12] i.e., when one of their number subsequently vowed any of the other Sacred Dances in the regular series, the company not only participated but also was in complete charge for the duration of the ceremony and had the authority to enforce whatever "laws" might be enacted. Inasmuch as the Sacrifice Dance was outside the regular [625] series, if that Dance were vowed, the members of the vower's company could participate if they wished, but in any case those not actually dancing acted as police.

561 An hypothesis which reconciles Kroeber's and our own data on the companies and age societies is the following. All or most of 575 the young men of the whole tribe, between the ages of 16 and 19, formed a company which met informally for some time before it joined either the Stars or the Wolf-men, and, after having gone through the Fly Dance, acted as police force during the Sacred Dances vowed by any of their number. When not participating in a Sacred Dance, the members joined in the purely social activi-

[12] Kroeber, 1908, p. 229, "The members of the age-societies are called beniinen, commonly translated at the present day as 'soldiers,' etymologically probably 'all-men,' or 'all-(?)-men.'"

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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ties of the larger society which the company had joined. Meanwhile another group was meeting informally before it was admitted into one or other of the Societies. Since the Stars and Wolf-men were approximately even in number, there probably was a regular alternation. According to reasonable estimate, the Potbellies joined the Stars about 1840; the next group of young men would then have joined the Wolves, say in 1843 or 1844; the following company joining the Stars in about 1849–50.

If the Sacred Dances, except the Sacrifice Dance, were gone through in order, there would thus be several companies each year whose members were eligible to vow any one of the Dances, and our informants were all under the impression that one or more of the Dances was given each summer. It seems quite clear that the Law Enforcer Dance was vowed only by the older levels of the active warriors. After having gone through this rite, these men more or less retired as "old men," and, having "sat on the sage," acquired certain privileges and freedom denied to their fellow tribesmen who had not yet gone through this Dance. These "old men" acted as ceremonial grandfathers, i.e. sponsors and teachers, for others going through the various lodges, but were no longer active as Stars or Wolf-men. They became members of an undifferentiated group of elders, the ranks of their original company having no doubt been drastically thinned out by the time they would have arrived at this status.

If the above interpretation be correct, there would be three age divisions: the "young men," those meeting in companies; the "middle-aged, mature men," whose companies had joined either the Stars or the Wolf-men, and, having gone through the Fly Dance, were eligible to vow the other Dances; the "old men" who had gone through the Law Enforcer's Dance and were no longer active in the Star and Wolf-men societies, except two of their number, one of whom served as announcer in each.

The young men, who together formed the company, being of approximately the same age, were tied together by bonds of friendship and there were apparently not a few pairs of "inseparable friends" in each company. One of our informants, Cora Chandler, indicated that the bonds holding together the members of a company were so intimate that marriage between their children was

taboo. This was the case regarding the children of "inseparable friends," but whether or not it was so regarding the children of all members of the company, mutual hospitality was frequently extended among the members—"a man would most often invite the members of his age group." Further, it was not unusual for members of the same company to go hunting and on raiding and revenge parties together. If a young man were killed at war and his body brought home, the members of his company were said to have assembled and danced around his bier, sometimes sobbing and crying as they danced.

As members of either one or other of the two larger societies they joined with members of other companies, in the Stars and Wolf-men respectively, to perform their proper social dance and to participate in activities such as gambling, horse-racing, "bragging contests," and so on, wherein they could compete with members of the opposite moiety. An individual seemingly tended to choose his serious enemy-friends from among those of the rival organization and thus is explained the spirit of competition which Kroeber notes between the Stars and "other companies."[18]

The Societies

The Stars and Wolf-men societies were organized along identical lines and were distinguished from each other only in details of procedure.

Each society included approximately half the total number of able-bodied warriors in the tribe. They each had two renowned men as leaders—two Star leaders of relatively recent times having been Comes A-flying and Crazy Bull; two Wolf-men leaders, Skinner and Strikes On Top. The leaders remained mounted when the others of the society were marching on foot in preparation for their dance, and carried whips at the dance as insignia. These men were supposed to have been outstanding warriors who had while mounted actually counted coup against the enemy. Two members of the last-admitted company served as *atsa'an* (waiters, messengers) at the dances, and each society had an announcer, presumably chosen from among the "old men" who had gone through the Law Enforcer Dance.

[18] Kroeber, 1908, p. 234.

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Each society had its distinctive songs which would be used by its component companies in carrying out their police duties during the Sacred Dances. Both had their "begging songs," as well as their marching and dance songs. Everyone in camp would know from the songs which of the societies was performing.

In connection with the distinctive dance of either society was first the preliminary "begging." This meant that the members of the society, dressed in their best and mounted on their finest horses, would select the lodges of prominent men belonging to the opposite society in front of which they would sing.[14] The leaders of the society were supposed to be present on these begging expeditions, otherwise their enemy-friends could take advantage of their absence and twit them by singing a special song.[15] The members of the society might be accompanied by their wives, who helped out in the singing, and usually a member of the society would suggest that they sing in front of the lodge belonging to his enemy-friend of the opposite society. If, while they were singing, the owner of the lodge failed to appear, his enemy-friend would peep into the lodge and at this the owner, assisted by his relatives, would get busy and give food to be used in the feast of the society which was doing the begging. If the owner of the lodge were a prominent man, who wished to take this occasion to enhance further his reputation, he might give something really valuable to the singers and would have the opportunity later of bragging: "On such-and-such an occasion, this is what I gave you Wolf-men (or Star men)." If he were a really good sport, our informants said, he would even send his wife out to sing with the others. After something had been given to the society, the singers sang other special songs,[16] while the rest danced.

After obtaining in this fashion the wherewithal for the feast, the society members lined up two-by-two at the entrance of the camp circle. The two noted men carrying whips remained mounted, while the column stepped in time to the music provided by the singers who were carrying the drum at the end of the procession. They wove in and out, snake-dance fashion, while

[14] A begging song of the Wolf-men was recorded as No. 98; two such songs of the Stars, as No. 96 and 97.

[15] Recorded as No. 101.

[16] Recorded as No. 95 and No. 100.

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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575 796 the marching song was sung.[17] Upon reaching the entrance of the enclosure, which had been constructed in the middle of the camp circle, the double column parted, and filed around the inside of the enclosure and took their places. The noted men bearing whips, having been helped in dismounting, took up their positions at either side of the entrance, and the musicians carried the drum to the center of the enclosure where they provided the music for the dancing.

[293] The dance of each society was distinctive. The Stars carried rattles, each designed by its owner,[18] which they waved about, as they danced. The Wolf-men did not have rattles or any special paraphernalia of the kind, but symbolized wolves as they stepped about, one hand at the forehead, and the other held behind to represent the tail.

575 535 These dances with their preliminary "begging" expeditions were not put on regularly, but at the discretion of the societies. A time would be chosen when the whole tribe, or most of the bands thereof, were together, when there were no Sacred Dances in immediate prospect, and when there was no apparent danger from the enemy. If these conditions prevailed, one of the societies might proceed, singing loudly: "Harden your hearts, Wolf-men (or Stars)," meaning, "be prepared to give."[19] Not immediately, but some time later, when auspicious conditions again prevailed, the other society would "retaliate."

These dances were purely social. In between times members belonging to one would compete with members of the other in horse-racing, hand-game gambling, "bragging contests" recounting conquests in love and war—each trying to out-do his opposite number.

[177] Sometime between 1875 and 1880 the Wolf-men adopted the Grass Dance from the Assiniboine. Thereafter this Society was sometimes called the Grass dancers.[20]

575 The Boy was under the impression that the Stars and Wolf-men

[17] Recorded as No. 102.

[18] Cf. Kroeber, 1908, pp. 236–37, with illustration.

[19] These songs were recorded as Nos. 93, 94 for the Stars.

[20] Kroeber, 1908, p. 238 describes this dance as the "war-dance." For the adoption of the Grass Dance and subsequent history of the two societies, see Flannery, 1946, pp. 39–70.

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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had probably had different names before his father's time but that the division into two big groups of "mature, middle-aged" men was always characteristic of Gros Ventre organization. This same informant was likewise under the impression that a man would have to stay with whichever of the two societies he, with his company, had originally joined. Turn Toes said however that he had known a few cases of men who had originally been Stars later joining with the Wolf-men, and of one Wolf-man who afterwards joined the Stars. These known cases, however, occurred fairly late in Gros Ventre history, and probably after the formation of new companies had ceased.

Sanctions of Force

Social sanctions were seemingly the most important means of control. Public opinion was effective in all aspects of conduct. Public disapproval meant loss of prestige and in more severe cases made itself felt by "shunning." It was brought to bear upon the individual in an especially effective way through ridicule, as exercised particularly in the enemy-friendship.[21]

A considerable number of misdeeds, like theft or failure to observe the rules in ceremonial life, were believed to result automatically in supernatural punishment ("bad luck"). Fear of retaliation through witchcraft also exerted a restraining influence.[22]

There were only three situations in which sanction through physical force was applicable. These were, first, failure to obey the rules of behavior promulgated by the society in charge while any one of the Sacred Dances was in progress; second, murder; third, adultery on the part of the wife.[23]

In regard to the first, it is quite clear that in case one of the Sacred Dances had been vowed, the whole tribe had to come together and remain united until the rite was finished. "If the bands happened to be scattered at the time a Sacred Dance was to

[21] For a discussion of the enemy-friendship, see pp. 102–06.

[22] Cf. also pp. 169–70 for a discussion of social and other types of motivation proposed to children. Witchcraft is dealt with in detail in Cooper, Ms., 1949.

[23] A detailed treatment of punishment for adultery is given in pp. 183–90, and will not be discussed in this section.

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
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Dance.[3] Women could vow the Old Women's Dance, but no other Dance could be vowed by women of any age.

The vower would call upon his company or age-society to help him fulfill his vow. As elsewhere explained, when the young boy was about 15 to 17 years old he together with others of his age joined in a body one or other of the two Soldier Societies, the Stars of the Wolves. Each such newly joining group of youths would be incorporated in the larger society of Stars or Wolves, but would keep its own identity through life as a subdivision of the Stars or Wolves, would have its own name (such as Potbellies, Calves, Holding-On-to-Dogs-Tail), and would hang together in common loyalty, protection and helpfulness.[3]

The vower's company, not all the Stars of Wolves, would help him make provision for the Dance, would be in charge of the affair and, during it and only during it, could exercise certain definite authority over other members of the tribe. If the tribe were on the march toward the spot where the dance was about to be held, that company came immediately after the Flat Pipe, according to The Boy, and during the Dance the band chiefs and Pipe keepers stepped aside and yielded to the company the authority to run the camp, compel attendance, give orders, and punish disobedience. If during a Sacred Lodge an individual hunted buffalo out of turn, before the communal hunt began, his lodge would be destroyed, his clothes cut up, and so forth. A like punishment might be meted out to any who might refuse to come into camp, at the time the dance was held.[4]

The two Soldier Societies, the Stars and Wolves, and their respective constituent companies were permanent organizations. The specific individuals who vowed or joined in any given Dance

[3] In 1948, The Boy indicated that probably the Crazy, Dog, Kit-fox and Drum Dances would have been vowed in order, that is, that a man would vow a Dog Dance only if he had been previously a Crazy Dancer, and so on. He was none too sure on this point. He was quite emphatic, however, that any man who belonged to either the Stars or Wolf Men could vow the Sacrifice Dance. [R.F.]

[3] For a description of the whole ceremonial organization, so far as it can be reconstructed, see Flannery, 1953, pp. 36-43.

[4] See Flannery, 1953, pp. 43-44.

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
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575 701 *796 did not constitute such. Their grouping was a purely temporary one, lasting only for the duration of the Dance. During, for instance, the Crazy Dance, all who joined in it, both members of the vower's company and others, were called Crazy Dancers, but once the Dance was over, they ceased to be such; there was no permanent organization or society of Crazy Dancers.

608 *796 A first step which a man who had vowed a Sacred Dance had to take was to fill an ordinary pipe, go to a man who had gone through the rite in fulfillment of a vow and who knew the rite well, and offer him the pipe, saying: "Here is the pipe. You will be my 'grandfather.'" By accepting the pipe,—and he could hardly refuse,—the latter became the vower's ritual "grandfather." At the same time the "grandfather's" wife became the vower's "grandmother," and both the vower and his wife (or wives) became "grandchildren" of the "grandfather" and his wife, and they addressed one another respectively by these names. The vower himself was in charge of the Dance and of the preparations therefor. The "grandfather's" role was that of liturgist, to instruct the vower in the ceremonies and observances proper to the given Lodge, and to see that they were carried out correctly. By way of exception, for the Old Women's Dance there were "grandmothers," but no "grandfathers."

When a given individual vowed one of the Sacred Lodges, other individuals could join with him in the rite, and each of these others would also choose a "grandfather,"—one who had participated in the given Dance,—with whom he (and his wife) would contract the same sacred relationship and who would perform the same offices. No person could be "grandfather" to more than one vower or associate on the occasion of any one dance.[4] The "grandfathers" would usually be older than the participants but not by any means necessarily very old men.

If, however, a younger man offered a pipe to a very feeble old man whose memory of the rites was poor, the old man might accept the pipe and so become the younger man's "grandfather."

[4] In 1948, The Boy indicated that for the Crazy Dance at least two younger men might together approach an older man and have him act as their ritual grandfather if he accepted them. [R.F.]

4: Flannery & Cooper E-5 (1939-1945) 1946
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525 Women (and men?) also gambled at ring-and-pin, the "ring" being made of four bones from deer feet.[4] The contest was mostly just for fun; the losers would have to "cook" for the winners.

Several types of bow and arrow contests, serving as archery practice as well as gambling sports, were indulged in by boys, young men, and sometimes older men, not, however, by girls or women. Both distance and accuracy contests occurred. In the latter, the target was a stick or arrow stuck upright in a small mound, or an arrow shot by one contestant a desired distance, say, 100 or 150 yards. In another kind of contest, a bow was set slanting, string upward; the string was vibrated by an arrow and the arrow on release flew toward the target about 35 or 40 feet away. In these bow and arrow contests, the wagers were small, usually arrows, sometimes a bow. Wagers were made by the players, and at times by onlookers too.

The modern 4-button hand game, distinct from the earlier 2-button one, is played more for fun than for winnings. At most the losers may be expected to [177] "cook" for the winners. This modern non-gambling hand game came to the Gros Ventre through an Arapaho, Dances All Night, in 1897, shortly after the [68] time the Ghost Dance was introduced among them (in 1891). The Ghost Dance itself had little popularity among the Gros Ventre and after a couple of years died out among them, but the non-gambling hand game took root and survived. At first, we were informed, it was played with two buttons, but after 1903 with four.

525 178 Gambling at playing cards, sometimes for large stakes, occurs today, but usually at the nearby white settlements, between Gros Ventre and white males. Some of the older Gros Ventre are shrewd poker players, and the younger ones play poker among themselves, but we obtained no record of ruinous stakes at cards among the Gros Ventre themselves on the reservation.

Major Gambling Games and Sports

525 The three more important gambling games and sports of half a century or more ago were races, the wheel game, and the 2-button hand game.

1. *Races*

[575] [648] On horse races, usually between the two soldier-police societies, the Stars and Wolves (the latter became later the "Grass Dancers"), or between the Gros Ventre and other tribes, such as the Piegan, at intertribal gatherings, were placed large bets—horses, saddles, and so forth—by the men, not however by

4 Illustration in Culin, *op. cit.*, fig. 706, p. 537.

4: Flannery & Cooper E-5 (1939-1945) 1946
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621 Members of one band could and not infrequently did gamble both for small
525 and for big stakes against members of other bands, just as one kinship group used to gamble against others. Tribal we-feeling certainly existed, but seemingly not as intense as band we-feeling, just as, in turn, the latter was not as intense as kin we-feeling. In inter-band, as in inter-kin, gambling, spectators, if they bet at all, would lay their wagers on the players of their own band, as required by band loyalty, regardless of the relative skill and reputation of the contesting players or teams.

575 For Gros Ventre men who had reached full adulthood and were still in the
[885] prime of life, there were two age-societies, called the Stars and the Wolves (or
525 Wolf-men). These two groups, with soldier-police functions, would join forces when necessary in keeping order, in fighting fires, and in defending the whole tribe against enemies, but for the rest rivalry between them was pretty keen. Stars would gamble against Wolves in big games for large stakes, but ordinarily a Star would not gamble against a Star or a Wolf against a Wolf, except for refreshments or a smoke or similar trifling "stakes." Inasmuch as membership in the two societies cut across the lines of kinship and band membership, inter-society gambling suffered an important restriction: if a Star were gambling in a given game, his relatives among the Wolves would not play or bet against him in that particular game. Kinship ties took precedence over society ties.

525 Gros Ventre would of course gamble for big stakes against members of other
648 tribes with whom they happened to be at the time on sufficiently good terms, or at least not bitterly and actively hostile, to meet and foregather peacefully, such as the Piegan, Flathead, Nez Percé, and Cree. In such intertribal contests they would often go out to win every possession of their opponents.

512 The Gros Ventre distinguished three kinds of friends: ordinary friends,
525 true or pledged friends, and enemy or war friends. As a rule ordinary close friends would not take opposite sides in a big gambling game. This was all the more true of pledged friends. Two boys, for instance, who liked each other
[608] and who had perhaps grown up together would, though belonging to different bands, enter into a sort of "sworn brotherhood," give each other presents, exchange intimate confidences, and promise, without religious rite of any kind, to stand by each other always, even to death if necessary. Two girls could also enter into a similar pact. Such "true" or pledged friends never gambled against each other either as players or as backers, at least never for stakes of value.

Of enemy or war friends we have previously spoken when describing the wheel game. Two enemy friends would gamble against each other for small stakes or big, the bigger the better. In fact a hand game for big stakes between

796 Bear Paw Mountains. It was there that the Gros Ventres had their first Grass dance alone. I don't know why they did things like this, but all those who had been given regalia walked instead of riding horseback. But the drum was packed on a special horse by itself and when they came to a stream, four men who owned the drumsticks carried the drum across, wading in without taking off their moccasins or other clothing. Furthermore those who owned the regalia were not supposed to help feed the crowd. They were not allowed to serve food and if they did, they had to give something away. Nor were these men supposed to borrow. They were supposed to have their own cup or dish and when it [415] was time to eat, if they didn't have any receptacle, they spread out their robes and the servers poured the coffee or soup or whatever was being served right in the robes."

114 174 796 The above account is the only explicit record of the actual transfer which was obtainable in the field. From details supplied by this same informant, however, as well as by others not so old as she, but who have accurate traditional knowledge of Gros Ventre culture, we have considerable information on the Grass dance as practiced from the time it was adopted.[7] Let us proceed then to the general description, first as the dance was carried out in the earlier period.

● 575 796 *Personnel and equipment.* At the time of adoption the Grass dance came into the possession of a society, the Wolves or Wolfmen. Only members of the society actually danced, wearing the distinctive headdress of deer hair, although the rest of their costume varied with the individual. The special regalia which went with the dance were: 2 crow-belts; a large drum and 4 fancy drumsticks; a spear or fork; a spoon; 2 wands representing swords; a whistle.[8] Each item was owned by an individual member of the society who was, by virtue of this ownership, an officer

[115] [7] I wish to thank all of my Gros Ventre friends for their assistance, especially The Boy, Thick, Thomas Main, Charles Buckman, Al and Cora Chandler, Mary Ereaux, Mathilda Cuts-the-Rope, but above all, my old "grandmothers," Coming Daylight and Singer.

[8] For reference to description of some of these, see footnote 3.

7: Flannery E-5 (1940, 1945) 1947
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of the society. The officers were free to transfer their ceremonial equipment to other members whom they would select. Following the typical Gros Ventre pattern of transfer of ownership, the recipient would present as lavish gifts as he could afford to the donor while the relatives of the recipient showed their appreciation of the favor to their kinsman by giving away expensive gifts in his honor. All of this took place publicly at the dance.

Particular dances and songs were attached to each office and the owners of the ceremonial drumsticks were required to know in correct order all the numerous songs and to provide the musical accompaniment for the whole ceremony. These four drumstick owners were joined in certain of the songs by four women singers selected from among the wives of the Wolf-men. The owners of the various objects were responsible for the proper care thereof, the crow-belts and the drum receiving most respect. When not in use, the crow-belts were kept wrapped in special bundles in the lodges of their respective owners, but were hung outside when the owner's wife was in her menstrual period. Moreover, those who danced wearing the crow-belts were obliged to refrain from sexual relations for two or three days previous to the dancing and, before donning the belts, to make a smudge of sweet-grass to incense themselves and the crow-belts. The drum, too, received special attention. One informant speaks of it as having been "nicely decorated," and we know from Kroeber's description[9] that the trimming was very similar to that of the Assiniboine Grass dance drum.[10]

Procedure. The actual dancing took place in a special circular dancing-place in the center of the camp circle. This "corral," as it was sometimes referred to, was constructed from several lodge covers, but was open at the top and the entrance thereto was at the east. The tipi of the drum-keeper was put up nearby. Opposite the opening of the "corral" was the place of honor where sat the officials,—with the exception of the sword owners, who with their assistants were at either side of the entrance. The

[9] Kroeber, loc. cit., p. 238.

[10] Lowie, R. H., The Assiniboine, AMNH-AP 4, pt. 1, 1909, p. 67.

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formance of the Grass dance, but that he was also paying for this by cancelling debts owed him at his store by four specific individuals whom he named; that anyone who objected to the children having the privilege would have to raise the ante; and that finally he would inaugurate this new feature of the Grass dance by having all of his own children dance first. No one disputed the point, and from that day to this children have had the freedom of the floor at any of the social gatherings.

The innovation described above was probably one of the last changes made in the form of the Grass dance before it began to disintegrate about 1916. Once the dog ritual was abandoned,—seemingly just prior to 1920,—the Grass dance as such disappeared, leaving only the round dances, one or two of which survive today and are performed at annual fairs, at celebrations of the Fourth of July, and so on.

Let us now turn to a consideration of the functions of the Grass dance in Gros Ventre culture in each of the two periods.

Functions

Earlier period. When the Grass dance was first adopted by the Gros Ventres its function was a relatively minor one of replacing the dance belonging to one of the two "soldier" societies, the Wolves, or Wolf-men as the members were called. The members of the parallel society were known as Stars. These two societies were approximately equal numerically and included between them the whole Gros Ventres population of able-bodied warriors. At the age of 18 or 19 the individual Gros Ventre young man who, together with say 30-50 of his age-mates, already belonged to one of several "companies"—the Rosebushes, or Calves, or Resting-on-the-breast-of-a-woman, or Holding-dogs'-tails, and so forth,—would enter either the Wolf society or the Star society, whichever one was selected by the "company." The individual would then be either a Wolf-dancer or a Star-dancer, although he retained close personal association with the members of his "company" which would have entered one society or the other as a body. With the mates of his "company" he would then go through the

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796 preliminary to the series of Sacred Dances, namely the Fly Dance.
575 After this ceremony was over he was eligible as a "soldier." That is, should one of the members of his "company" vow to give any one of the Sacred Dances in the series, he and other members of the society to which he belonged—either Wolf or Star—would act as police for the time during which the Dance was being held. Thus it was that Stars might police the hunt
[625] and keep order in the camp circle during one such Sacred Dance while Wolves might perform the same duties at another time, depending on which moiety the vower belonged to.

When not engaged as soldiers in connection with one of the Dances, the two societies exhibited the keenest rivalry, particularly in war-deeds, but also in gambling, in foot-racing, and whenever else opportunity offered. One aspect of this rivalry was apparent when each put on its own dance. The general procedure of both was identical but there were a few distinctive features. When the whole tribe was together and there was no serious threat of war, one society or the other would decide the time was ripe to hold its dance. Let us assume that the Star society had so decided.

The members of the Star society would then don their best clothes and, mounted on their finest horses, go around the camp circle accompanied by two especially prominent members who had counted coup against the enemy while on horseback. They would
[533] sing special begging songs in front of the lodges of several well-to-do members of the opposite society. It was a challenge to the Wolf-men and they usually responded in the accepted fashion by giving large quantities of food, in which their relatives would help them out. This would provide the feast at the dance. The Stars then proceeded to the opening of the camp circle and all dismounting except the two very prominent warriors, formed in a line by twos, the four singers with their hand drums last. To the accompaniment of a marching song the line moved "snake-dance" fashion weaving back and forth, to the dancing lodge which had been erected in the center of the camp circle. At the entrance to the lodge the line divided, some going to the right,

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others to the left forming a circle inside the dancing-place where they sat. The two prominent warriors, having been assisted in dismounting, took up their places, one on each side of the entrance, holding whips in their hands. It was their duty to rouse any lagging dancers, whipping them if necessary. Each member had his own rattle, of peculiar shape but painted with individual designs, which he waved about as he danced. The wives of some of the dancers joined the four singers in singing certain of the dance songs. Two of the youngest members acted as *atsa'an* (waiters) tending to the fire, getting water, and so on. Occasionally during the dance a woman relative of one of the participants would rush up to him, throw down a blanket or some other gift in his honor, grab his rattle and dance for a short time. Members of the other society did not join in the festivities or partake of the feast, in spite of the fact that most of the provisions for the latter had been donated by some of them.

At some future date, however, the Wolf-men would agree that the time was auspicious for them to have a dance and "get even" with the Stars. They would of course have their own songs, sung in front of the lodges of prominent members of the Star society, but otherwise the procedure was identical, including their accompaniment by two outstanding warriors, the "snake-dance," the arrangement of the lodge in the center of the camp-circle, and so on. The Wolf-men differed from the Stars in their actual dance in that they did not have rattles and in dancing seemingly intended to personify wolves, placing one hand on the forehead and the other at the back to represent the animal's tail.[14]

The adoption of the Grass dance meant merely that the more elaborate dog ritual, with its regalia and greater degree of organization, replaced the dance of the Wolf-men although the begging preliminary and so on remained the same. So far as we can see, at the time of its adoption, the Grass dance was a case of pure substitution and one that fitted readily into the cultural situation. First of all, according to Lowie's information, the Assini-

[14] I am deeply grateful to my colleague, John M. Cooper, who generously placed at my disposal his field notes on the Wolf society.

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796 boine themselves considered the Grass dance as a modern form
575 of one of their own older soldier society dances.[15] Secondly there
178 were certain similarities between the original Star and Wolf dances on the one hand and the Grass dance on the other. In both types there was dancing to exhaustion and the employment of special officers to rouse the laggards,—the whip men in the first instance, the sword men in the other. Again women singers helped out occasionally in both. Still another feature in common was the custom of giving presents away, not to a relative who was a member, but in honor of that relative. Thus, the Grass dance became a part of Gros Ventres culture.

182 So long as Gros Ventre culture continued on its traditional eco-
178 nomic basis, the hunting of buffalo, the Grass dance fulfilled its function as the dance of the Wolf soldier society and was simply parallel to the dance of the rival Star society. The disappearance of the buffalo, however, wrought many changes in Gros Ventre life as it did in that of all of the Plains tribes. The Gros Ventres were fortunate in that the last large herd of buffalo happened to be in their hunting territory and thus they could benefit a little longer than most of their neighbors from this mainstay of their old way of life. This is not to say that prior to the extinction of the buffalo Gros Ventre culture was flourishing in pristine glory. Far from it. For one thing, at the time of the adoption of the
[[77]] Grass dance between 1875 and 1880, intertribal warfare, with which many aspects of their culture were interrelated, was at a minimum and was itself soon to disappear. Again, certain aspects of their ceremonial life had fallen into disuse, some of the Sacred Dances not having been given for years previously. Nevertheless, although the religious culture was dwindling, much was still left and the social side was relatively intact.

182 *Later period.* The break in economic life with the killing of
796 the last of the buffalo in 1884 was accompanied by the virtual disappearance of the Gros Ventre ceremonial organization. The public rites of a religious nature, which had formerly made for social solidarity as well, were abandoned. The last Sacrifice

[15] Lowie, loc. cit. p. 66.

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Dance (Sun Dance), for example, was given in that very year and, so far as our data go, but one Crazy Dance was held after that. The seasonal Flat Pipe rite was discontinued. Furthermore there was a breakdown in the socio-political life. The necessity for nomadic life had disappeared and as a consequence there was no longer need of policing the hunt or keeping order in the camp circle when the whole tribe gathered so that, with the further establishment of peace, the raison d'être for two rival soldier societies was gone.

In the transition period the missionaries were trying valiantly to fill the gap in religious life but did not offer a satisfactory solution for the social situation; nor did the Agency which had become the center of the new economic life. It was the Grass dance, which as we have seen survived in a somewhat changed form, that seems to have filled the void left in social life.

In its earlier form the Grass dance was purely social in nature, as was the Star dance, but the latter faded away while the former attained a position of heightened importance. One of the factors accounting for this fact seems to be that the Grass dance "had more to it," as our informants put it. The performance of the dog ritual was certainly far more spectacular than the simpler dance of the Star society and, in addition, it had semi-ceremonial connotations reminiscent of other features of the older Gros Ventre culture which were lacking from the Star dance. For example, the owners of the regalia in the Grass dance were likewise officers of several degrees of importance therein, as was the case in the performance of the Sacred Dances. Again, sex abstinence was required before dancing with the crow-belts as it was before participating in the Sacrifice Dance (Sun Dance) and before dancing with the Feathered Pipe. Ceremonial incensing of persons and equipment had been a marked characteristic of Gros Ventre religious life. The formal transfer of office and regalia duplicates the pattern of transfer of office of Pipe Keeper, transfer of painted lodges, and so on. Recounting of war deeds was frequently demanded in connection with many aspects of Gros Ventre life,—to validate the giving of a name, the erection of a

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gave away in his honor." When first adopted the Grass dance offered only one such opportunity—and a relatively minor one. As times changed, however, the Grass dance provided practically the sole occasion for gaining prestige while at the same time carrying out the old pattern of kinship obligation by enhancing the prestige of relatives.

The possibility in the later form of the Grass dance of paying for privileges, such as locking the door, or whipping those who did not get up to dance, gave further scope for the acquisition of prestige through liberality, as did also, of course, payments at transfer of office.

It was estimated by our informants that around 1900 as much as a thousand dollars in goods and cash changed hands at a single performance of the Grass dance. At that time it was not uncommon for the dance to be held at weekly intervals. So long as the Gros Ventre were relatively prosperous and had property to display and exchange according to the older patterns, the Grass dance continued to function. With increasing poverty, however, along with other factors such as the changing points of view and interests on the part of the younger generation, and the dying out of the older warriors, the Grass dance, the core of which was the dog ritual, gradually paled off leaving but the remnants of some of the round dances which had been added to the Grass dance as originally adopted from the Assiniboine.

SUMMARY

Between 1875 and 1880 the Gros Ventres received the Grass dance from the Assiniboine. From the date of adoption up to about 1890 the Grass dance was performed only by members of one of the two soldier societies and the custodians of the ceremonial equipment were the officers. Offices were transferred among members according to the old Gros Ventre pattern.

The essential core of the Grass dance was the dog ritual, a ceremonial eating of dog flesh, carried out by the owners of the equipment with the assistance of four warriors selected from among the lay members. Other features of the program at each

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Other features of the program at each performance of the Grass dance included the "punishing" dance, the smoking song, the forfeiture of property, the "throwing away" of property represented by sticks, gift-giving in honor of loved ones.

In 1890 changes in the form of the Grass dance began to be noticeable. By 1900 the Grass dance included all in the tribe who wished to participate. The official personnel had been expanded to include four "chiefs," four war-bonnet owners, two owners of ceremonial black dresses, two women whip-owners and two female assistants. Transfer of all offices was, however, carried out as before.

The dog ritual continued unchanged to be the highlight of the program. Perhaps the most obvious change in procedure was the inclusion of round dances, especially the Ringtail dance, in which both men and women participated and for which "punishing" songs had been devised. The smoking song and the forfeiture of property were retained, but with some elaborations. Although the "throwing away" of property gradually disappeared, the gift-giving in honor of relatives was very much emphasized. Other very minor changes were inaugurated at intervals up until about 1916.

The changing functions of the Grass dance coincide with the changing form and can likewise be considered as of two periods, —the first from 1875–80 to 1890; the second from 1890 to 1916.

In the first period the function of the Grass dance was a relatively minor one. It was adopted, and fitted into place, as a substitute for the simpler and less colorful dance of the Wolf soldier society, and paralleled the dance of the other soldier society, the Star society. In view especially of the preliminary "begging" songs, the Grass dance seemingly was the expression of but one phase of the intense rivalry between the two soldier societies.

With the extinction of the buffalo in 1884 came the breakdown of the older culture. By 1890 not only had most of the public religious rites disappeared, but the social organization was greatly altered. As the economic basis was changed, the nomadic life and the camp circle were abandoned, and the two soldier societies no